TRAINING OF FORCES OF BELLIGERENT NATIONS OF EUROPE

PREPARED BY THE WAR COLLEGE DIVISION, GENERAL STAFF CORPS AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE STATEMENT OF A PROPER MILITARY POLICY FOR THE UNITED STATES

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1. INFORMATION DESIRED.

In a memorandum dated November 15, 1915, the Chief of Staff directs that a brochure be submitted giving the following information:

The amount of training stated in terms of total number of hours given in time of peace for each arm and the technical troops of all the belligerent nations of Europe involved in the war, stating what additional training has been given during the progress of the war:

(*a*) To troops that had previously been trained; (*b*) to troops that had received no previous training.

The brochure should show, in case of the latter, the period of training experience in this war has shown to be necessary to obtain satisfactory results. Particular attention will be given to England's attempted solution of the problem of training volunteers after war had been declared, as their condition more nearly approximates our own than any other belligerent.

2. NATIONS INVOLVED.

The belligerent nations of Europe thus far (December, 1915) involved in the war are:

Austria-Hungary.
Belgium.
Bulgaria.
France.
Germany.
Great Britain.
Italy.
Montenegro.
Russia.
Servia.
Turkey.

3. INFORMATION AVAILABLE IS INCOMPLETE AND INDEFINITE.

The total number of hours of training prescribed or given in peace in the various arms of the armies of all the belligerent nations now at war is not a matter of record in the War College Division,

nor is such information available without correspondence. Train ing in the armies of the above countries, except that of Great Britain is compulsory and is prescribed in years rather than hours. Such countries in this brochure will be treated separately from Great Britain. In some it is possible to ascertain the customary period of training each day during the six months devoted as a rule to train ing individuals and smaller units. The daily periods devoted to training during regimental, brigade, division, and grand maneuvers varies with the customs of each country, its climate, etc. In some reports troops of a certain arm are said to drill from — o'clock to — o'clock a. m., and — o'clock to — o'clock p. m., but such reported periods do not agree for the same arm of service and country in all reports, and it seems possible that they are not uniform for all organizations of the same arm, if, indeed, prescribed at all from army headquarters. For example, the military attaché, Paris, France reporting on French cavalry, once wrote:

> The matter of drill hours is left largely in the hands of subordinate commanding officers, except, of course, when the whole regiment drills together on days and at hours designated by the colonel commanding.

Later, an officer on duty with a French cavalry regiment reported that from October 1 to April 1 training was given daily, except Sundays and holidays, from 6 to 10 a. m. and 12.15 to 5 p. m., or $8\frac{3}{4}$ hours. He did not report hours employed during maneuvers of regiments, brigades, etc., April-September each year.

4. TRAINING IN COUNTRIES HAVING COMPULSORY SERVICE.

The following table, showing number of years' service in active army, approximate number of hours' training per year (assuming that all time available is utilized) for various arms and total train ing required of members of variously termed reserves, is as close an estimate of training in peace as can be made. While service is compulsory for all citizens, within certain ages and subject to certain exemptions, it is known that some enlisted men detailed on various duties of administration are excused from a portion or all training in certain countries. The approximate training represented that received by soldiers not thus detailed and excused:

Belligerent nations of Europe.	Years with active army.	Hours per day, except Sundays and holidays.	Total hours active army.	Reserve training.	Aggregate hours.
Austria-Hungary:					
Cavalry	3	8	7,200	11 weeks..	7,728
Horse artillery	3	6½	5,850	...do.....	6,279
Other artillery	2	6½	3,900	14 weeks..	4,446
Infantry	2	8	4,800	...do.....	5,472
Engineers	2	8	4,800	...do.....	5,472
Belgium:					
Cavalry	2	(1)	(1)	8 weeks...	(1)
Field artillery	1¾	(1)	(1)	6 weeks...	(1)
Other artillery	1¼	(1)	(1)	4 weeks...	(1)
Infantry	1¼	(1)	(1)	...do.....	(1)
Engineers	1¼	(1)	(1)	...do.....	(1)
Bulgaria:					
Cavalry	3	(1)	(1)	48 weeks..	(1)
Field artillery	3	(1)	(1)	...do.....	(1)
Other artillery	3	(1)	(1)	...do.....	(1)
Infantry	2	(1)	(1)	54 weeks..	(1)
Engineers	3	(1)	(1)	48 weeks..	(1)
France:					
Cavalry	3	8½	7,650	7 weeks...	8,014
Field artillery	3	8½	7,650	...do.....	8,014
Other artillery	3	8½	7,650	...do.....	8,014
Infantry	3	8½	7,650	...do.....	8,014
Engineers	3	8½	7,650	...do.....	8,014
Germany:					
Cavalry	3	9	8,100	8 weeks...	8,532
Horse artillery	3	9	8,100	...do.....	8,532
Other artillery	2	9	5,400	...do.....	5,832
Infantry	2	9	5,400	...do.....	5,832
Engineers	2	9	5,400	...do.....	5,832
Italy:					
Cavalry	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Field artillery	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Other artillery	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Infantry	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Engineers	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Montenegro (militia system, 18 to 62 years of age):					
Artillery, recruit service	2	8?	1,200	330 days...	3,300
Other arms, recruit service	2	8?	800	...do.....	2,900
Russia:					
Cavalry and Cossacks	4	4	4,800	(1)	(1)
Horse artillery	4	4	4,800	(1)	(1)
Other artillery	3	4	3,600	(1)	(1)
Infantry	3	4	3,600	(1)	(1)
Engineers	4	4	3,600	(1)	(1)
Servia:					
Cavalry	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Artillery	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Infantry	1½	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Turkey:					
Cavalry	3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Artillery	3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Infantry	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Engineers	3	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)

[1] No report.

Hours shown above represent the possible aggregate, not the average duration, of training. For reasons given in paragraph 3, the total hours are founded partially on estimates and, while approximately correct for some forces, are not reliable indices of training given to an entire army of any nation.

5. BRITISH REGULAR ARMY.

The land forces of the United Kingdom consisted (in peace) of the regular army and territorial army. Enlistment in each is still voluntary. Service in the regular army was for 12 years, with permission

to extend to 21 years. Of the original 12, the majority of men served 7 years with the colors and 5 in the army reserve. The regular army included a special reserve consisting of troops not permanently embodied in units of the regular army. As to training in the regular army—

The battalion commander is responsible that the company commanders are thoroughly instructed, and he supervises, but does not lay down, the methods which they employ to train their companies. The company commanders assisted by their subalterns and noncommissioned officers are directly responsible for the efficiency of the rank and file, and their advancement in the service depends on their success. Recruits after a course of three months' training at a depot should be sufficiently trained to take their places in the ranks of the company. * * *

No record is found of total hours' training prescribed for any branch of the regular army.

6. BRITISH TERRITORIAL ARMY (ESTABLISHED IN 1908).

Service in the territorial army was for four years. Such men received as training a fortnight in camp and a certain number of drills per year and a musketry course according to branch of the service.

Arms of the service.	Schedule of training (preliminary hours).	Territorial army (subsequent annual hours).	Total hours.
Yeomanry	40	10	50
Artillery	45	20	65
Engineers	40–45	10–15	50–60
Signal service	45	15	60
Infantry	40	10	50
Service corps	28	15	43
Medical corps	42	10	52

In addition: Recruits' course of musketry (preliminary) and annual course of musketry, and from 8 to 15 days of annual training in camp for each corps. Six hours per day devoted to training in camp.

7. BRITISH "NEW ARMY."

Between August and November, 1914, Parliament authorized an increase of the army of 2,000,000. As the territorial army is not obliged to serve abroad, this force is called the "new army."

In September, 1914, army orders prescribed for "*trained soldiers;*" i. e., those who had qualified in a recruit course of musketry, the course being fired after two months' service, the following training:

Same as recruits' fourth, fifth, and eighth weeks, at 36 hours each week individual, and also 20 hours' company and 16 hours' battalion training during first month. Later, these men were to have five weeks' company, two weeks' battalion, and two weeks' brigade training. In addition, a lecture (one hour 7 to 8 p. m.) daily.

Trained soldiers for home service were to receive the same training, utilizing 18 weeks instead of 13 weeks.

Recruits for service abroad were to have prescribed individual training in three months, and those for home service, in four months.

8. TRAINING EXTENDED TO SIX MONTHS.

Army orders of October, 1914, prescribed the following periods of training for the arms of service shown:

British new army.	Weeks of recruit training.	Hours per week.	Section. training.	Company or battery training.	Battalion or brigade training.	Division training.	Total hours.
Artillery	6	48	7	5	2	6	1,248
Engineers:							
Mounted	13	48	.....	2	7	4	1,248
Dismounted	10	48	.....	6	6	4	1,248
Infantry	10	48	.....	5	10	1	1,248

In addition lectures from two hours weekly to one hour daily were given on subjects such as the following:

Discipline; organization of expeditionary force; causes and history of the war; characteristics of hostile and allied armies; special duties of the arm receiving lectures; sanitation and health; the German Army, etc.

9. ADDITIONAL TRAINING DURING THE WAR.

Due to lack of authority for representatives of the United States Army to remain at the front with armies of belligerent nations, reports of steps taken to provide additional training during the war are few and incomplete.

10. ADDITIONAL TRAINING, GERMAN TROOPS.

A camp for recruit training was established at Beverloo, Belgium, for a course of eight weeks' training, especially in firing and combat exercises, following preliminary training at home stations. Capacity of camp, 2,500 animals, 25,000 men. Similar depots for increased training in essentials of the character of warfare experienced were established throughout Germany, the course at each being eight weeks. Men were trained to fire from trenches and trees, practicing concealment. They were trained in construction of types of trenches.

Cavalry of the German Army was trained to endure long marches rather than to charge, and to accustom horses to bivouac in the open rather than rely upon stabling.

Field artillery were trained in construction of trenches and concealment from aerial observation.

Aviators were taught better cooperation with field artillery.

Candidates for appointment as second lieutenant are given practical training at the recruit depots above referred to.

11. ADDITIONAL TRAINING, FRENCH TROOPS.

Independently of the student reserve officers, 200 noncommissioned officers of the active army were given special courses of training, April 6–May 31, 1915, at St. Cyr, Maixent, Joinville, and Fontainebleau, to qualify for appointment as second lieutenants.

It is impracticable to ascertain how much training during the war is given men forwarded from regimental depots to replace casualties, but most if not all such received training in former years. This number is very large. The Seventy-ninth and One hundred and thirty-first Infantry to June, 1915 (10 months of war), each received 13,000 men in all to maintain its effective strength of 3,000.

Imagine the result if such proportion of untrained volunteers join an American regiment in war!

It was soon developed that the reconnoissance service of cavalry was badly performed, infantry being surprised, as no warning was received from cavalry screen.

The marksmanship of infantry was poor, too little ammunition being allowed for instruction of recruits (120 rounds instead of 200 allowed in peace).

In September, 1915, the class, due in October, 1916, for compulsory service, assembled at depots for training.

During service at the front a French regiment of infantry or cavalry in the first line spends 3 days in trenches, 3 days in cantonment exposed to bombardment, and 6 days in quiet cantonment; then 12 days in the second line (reserve). Thus it has 3 days on the alert, 3 days in danger, and 18 days in security. Artillery, less tried by fire, are continually in action and not withdrawn to the rear for rest. Rest given infantry and cavalry is moral rather than physical. While in second line (12 days) a 15-kilometer march is had each day, and company, battalion, or regimental maneuvers. Bayonet fencing, throwing petards, reversing parapets of trenches, crawling, running, target practice, machine-gun practice, etc., utilize entire period in second line. One half the French Army drills while the other half guards the trenches.

French infantry is trained to organize and carry out the assault of three lines of trenches constructed in rear of their positions to

resemble the German trenches in their front and on terrain similar to that in their front. Men are trained to rush 100 kilometers and lunge at figures dressed as German soldiers in the trenches used for assault training.

12. ADDITIONAL TRAINING, CANADIAN TROOPS.

Although the Canadian contingent had had some training before sailing, the first expedition (31,250 men) was sent to camp at Salisbury Plain for six months' additional training. One regiment (Princess Patricia's) was given only two months in England and two months in France before being placed in the trenches in February, 1915. It was composed largely of men with previous service in the regular army or South Africa.

Other than this regiment the personnel and training of the Canadians is said to have been inferior to the territorial force.

The First Canadian Division was sent to France after four and one-half months' training at Salisbury Plain. The second division was not sent to France until September, 1915. These two divisions, with authorized strength of 40,000 men, have met heavy casualties, and as selected men are transferred to them to replace losses, it represents the strength which Canada can maintain in the field in view of preliminary training given in Canada and supplementary training in England and France before troops with no previous training can be safely employed at the front. Such strength was not reached at the front until after 14 months' of war.

13. BRITISH CADET SCHOOL IN THE FIELD.

In January, 1915, to replenish the corps of officers, sadly depleted since August, 1914, Field Marshal Sir John French, commander in chief of the British forces in the field, established a school for training officers at Blendecques near St. Omer, France. Cadets are selected from enlisted men of educational, physical, and moral qualities, who have been tested as good field soldiers in actual campaign. The course, which lasts one month, is one of demonstration and practice coupled with a minimum of theory. Each cadet passes 48 hours in the trenches and visits observation posts of a battery or group of batteries, submitting report of his tour. Machine-gun tactics is an important subject of instruction. Among others are range finding, siting and construction of trenches, sapping, sketching, night operations, use of rifle and hand grenades, cooperation of infantry, artillery, and engineers, etc. The capacity is 105 cadets, that number being graduated each month. Graduates have been favorably reported by divisional and corps commanders. The Artists' Rifles (twenty-eighth battalion, London regiment) was utilized as the basis for this training corps for officers in the field.

14. BRITISH MACHINE-GUN SCHOOL IN THE FIELD.

A school for training the increased personnel employed with machine guns, the number of which guns with field units was doubled, was established at Wisques, near St. Omer, France, under an enthusiastic musketry officer. The course, which lasts two weeks, consists of improvising positions and gun shelter, oblique or enfilade fire, firing from behind houses through openings in walls, or from within houses and cellars through openings in the roofs, firing from armored motor cars and aeroplanes, etc.

15. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE FOR HIGHER UNIT COMMANDERS.

It is reported that regimental and battalion commanders of the expeditionary forces still training in Great Britain were sent to France in relays for a week's experience and training at the front, that on returning they might make the training of their proper commands more practical and appropriate to the service anticipated when such commands reach the front.

16. BRITISH CENTRAL TRAINING CAMP AT HAVRE.

In the summer of 1915 a camp was established near the base at Havre for the supplementary training of men arriving from England and considered deficient in the essentials of infantry training. All men passing the camp were subjected to "tests," and not permitted to go to the front until found proficient by the commandant, Maj. H. F. Whinney, Royal Fusiliers. Instructors are experienced officers and noncommissioned officers recently returned from active service in the trenches, some of them recuperating from wounds or sickness. In addition a very good officer is selected from each division at the front and detailed for a tour of two months as instructor. This maintains instruction in pace with the evolution of the peculiar conditions of warfare which characterize the struggle in France. The course includes musketry, entrenching, first aid, pack-saddlery, bayonet fencing, bombing, revetting, construction of obstacles, particularly barbed-wire entanglements, machine-gun practice, the disabling of guns, and conduct of artillery fire. Lectures and practical instruction are given groups of officers and men, at times to as many as 300 in a group or class. All are impressed with the idea that their lives may depend upon following the advice given. Subjects are so practical, and the necessity for knowledge is so vital, the hour so solemn, and lecturers men who have learned by wounds and bitter experience in action what to avoid, that there is no lack of interest or attention. In musketry targets represent German helmets barely visible over a parapet, bobbing up over a

front of several hundred yards. Men are taught the character of trees and houses in the landscape, so as readily to recognize aiming points and division lines between sectors. They are taught the distinction between cover from view and cover from fire. Trenches of patterns found best at the front are built, faced by trenches similar to those used by the Germans. Men under instruction occupy these trenches 24 hours to test their knowledge of what they have been taught in lectures. Men are taught to throw dummy bombs from a narrow fire trench into trenches in front and to advance in specified formations of small groups or squads, clearing "pockets" between traverses of any hostile occupants by "lobbing" bombs into such pockets. They are taught to hurl live bombs and shown how to avoid accidents, relieving men in fire trenches, formations for assault, bringing up supports, attacking "hostile" trenches occupied by dummy "Germans" which must be bayoneted or bombed, use of respirators to avoid effects of gas, positions taken in trenches when aeroplanes are sighted, use of trench sprayers to negative effects of gas that has been thrown by "Germans," are interesting and practical exercises undertaken. They represent the last word in practical infantry training for the character of warfare peculiar to the situation in northeastern France.

17. DEDUCTIONS.

(*a*) The time devoted in peace to training in all other countries exceeds that given all British forces, excepting possibly the British Regular Army, which constituted at the outbreak of the war the only British force fit for service on the Continent, and compared with strength of the new army was very small. It included many men of several years' training, reenlisted and professional soldiers, and its service in August and September, 1914, demonstrated the value of troops thoroughly trained and habituated to discipline. But its casualties, fighting against odds, were very heavy.

(*b*) All other British troops, excepting possibly those from Australia, required from six to nine months' training after organization, regardless of previous training, before they were considered fit for service at the front. No reports have been received to indicate whether Australian troops required more training than had been received under the compulsory training required by the defense act. It is probable that such additional training was necessary and was given in camps in Egypt before such troops were sent to the Dardanelles in the spring of 1915.

(*c*) Casualties in the ranks of units from countries having compulsory training were replaced by men of reserve forces, variously designated, who had had training in peace. Casualties in British

and Canadian units had to be replaced by men with no training in peace, and the preparation of such men required at least six months' intensive training in Great Britain, after which many were found unfit and were given supplementary training in France before joining units at the front.

(*d*) The proportion of the British regular and territorial forces to the population of Great Britain and Canada being greater than that of the Regular Army and Organized Militia of the United States to the population of the United States, a greater percentage of British citizens than of United States citizens had received some military training before the war commenced, and the amount of such training in the territorial forces was greater than in the Organized Militia of the United States.

18. APPLICATION TO SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

(*a*) If imminence of war should warrant mobilization of the United States land forces, it is obvious that only the Regular Army and such of the Army reserve as have very recently served in the Regular Army can be considered ready at once for active field service against a force from any country now at war, including the British New Army thus far sent to the Continent.

(*b*) The United States has now no adequate method of supplying properly trained men to replace casualties in the ranks of the Regular Army or to compose the ranks of the large number of combatant units required in addition to the existing mobile regular troops to resist invasion.

(*c*) The experience of the British with the new army confirms the estimate in paragraph 42 of A Statement of a Proper Military Policy (W C D 9053–90) that—

> Twelve months' intensive training is the minimum that will prepare troops for war service. Therefore the 500,000 partly trained troops above referred to require nine months' military training before war begins.

(*d*) Conditions of modern war do not afford time to train an army after war becomes imminent. Not only must material be secured, but personnel must be trained before military operations can be undertaken with any hope of success.

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